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New book underscores teens' truth

By Sophie Braccini



Four Intuitive Writing Project authors, (from left) Charlotte Houston, Sofia Ruiz, Maddie Alvarado, and Veronika Pister Photo provided

the battles, the joys and triumphs of this generation of girls "who were made for these times."

While these young authors all have unique voices, each of them very different, they all exude a comfortable confidence in their writing. Some are feisty - "I've got my own back," "let all of life be guided by your 'unfettered howl'" - others talk about politics, about love, about philosophy, about finding who they are and reclaiming it proudly, about getting respect, about finding their place in the world.

Perlman says that the texts are very personal and always tell something about the author, even, she explains, when fiction work reveals a piece of us covered in metaphor. In her classes, Perlman uses the Amherst Writers & Artists system that encourages everyone to create art, while all comments highlight only the positive aspects of the work. The result is a compilation of high-caliber texts that are well constructed and creative, each with a purely genuine style.

The girls in the classes have written much more than what is in the book. What is published there is what they were ready to share with others, with their names in print. The different categories in the book are journalism and creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry.

Perlman explains that most of the fiction writing comes from girls in the "Heroine's Journey" class where girls 13 and up learn to say their truth. Perlman says that when the girls write their stories, they discover things about themselves, learn to value what is inside them, and trust their intuition. There is no grade, no judgment in these writing groups, the expression itself is enough, she says. What is shared in the class stays in the class. Perlman adds that she would share with parents if a danger to self or others emerged.

In the class called Intuitive Leadership the students develop their ability to articulate what they are most passionate about. Perlman says that many of the texts produced in that class were too personal to be shared in a book.

In "Our World, My Voice" the girls reflect and write after sharing texts that address global issues. The nonfiction part of the book certainly comes from that workshop. But also, as Perlman notes, a lot of the poetry in the book comes from these reflections that underscore deep emotions in the young women.

In the introduction of the book, Melissa Quiter, who directs the middle school program, wrote that the work of the Intuitive Writing Project is to build a movement of intuitive self-trust, supporting all people to speak from the heart and declare what they know to be true. This book is the tangible manifestation of this goal.

The Orinda Books presentation is scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 20 from 1 to 3 p.m. Genuine Goodness will provide refreshments. Registration is \$10. For reservations, visit <http://bit.ly/DWYKTBT>

"Declare What You Know To Be True" is a manifesto and an ode to the freedom and creativity felt by a group of Lamorinda teen girls. The recently published book is a compilation of original texts from high school students who have participated in one of the Intuitive Writing Project classes. Some of the young authors will read passages Aug. 20 at Orinda Books, where the book can be found.

Elizabeth Perlman started the Intuitive Writing Project - an after-school writing program for teen girls to find their voice - in Orinda four years ago. Perlman, who said she struggled as a teen to find her true calling, developed the different multi-week sessions to support young women's desire for empowerment and authenticity.

In this first edition the young women share their vision of what the world is like to them today. They write poetry, fiction, non-fiction and describe the struggles,

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